



GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS ■ BENTON HARBOR, MI 49022

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Speaker Kevin Cotter
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Speaker Cotter:

I am writing to share a personal experience as to why I believe use of smart, properly governed, large-scale brownfield TIF tools are the foundation for community and economic development. A senior leader in a multi-national manufacturing company I helped recruit to Michigan once told me, "Our belief is we will never locate in a community that does not have a vision for its future with commitment to achieve it."

The joint venture of Worthington Steel and Armstrong World Industries built a new facility and brought over 125 new jobs into the City of Benton Harbor because they saw firsthand how we were using the brownfield tools to clean up the downtown, create an Arts District and redevelop countless acres of blight. This individual said "we would rather locate in a city that is creating a trajectory of positive change than a community that thinks they have no need to continually plan for progress." That statement at the project announcement brought 300 other new jobs through two new manufacturing locations to Benton Harbor within six months.

As you may know, previous brownfield financing tools were critical to the redevelopment of more than 500 acres of blighted and contaminated land in Benton Harbor as part of the Harbor Shores Development that has transformed our community. Three million square feet of old buildings were demolished and over 160,000 metric tons of waste delivered to certified landfills paved the way for Whirlpool to develop its new North American headquarters in the City of Benton Harbor, and to renovate an outdated manufacturing building into our global refrigeration technology center, bringing 200 new jobs to Michigan and over 1,300 employees and \$165M of investment into the downtown. Imagine a project so large that the City of St. Joseph agreed to annex land into the City of Benton Harbor, and over 1,500 local diverse

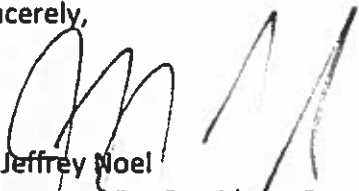
residents attended the celebratory kickoff to a multi-faceted project that included plans now realized to build affordable housing, invest in and expand programming in two new Boys and Girls Club facilities, and to mandate a threshold of hiring for residents from within the distressed census tracts.

This project has stimulated other private investors to open restaurants, a new hotel, build loft apartments, and bring mentors and volunteers into the schools and local community organizations. None of this would have been possible without the former brownfield financing tools that served to enable government, community, business and education leaders to rally around a common vision and deploy time, energy and resources at the intersection of entrepreneurialism, capitalism and social consciousness.

While current programs are somewhat helpful for small and mid-sized projects, they simply are incapable of enabling the projects that have the scale to bring sustainable physical and social change to our decaying communities. The tools used in the Harbor Shores project helped replace wooden water lines, upgraded sewage systems which helped stop wasteful leakage, built new roads, and stimulated a recognition that progressive change in any community requires a collective spirit that only through shared responsibility can a shared opportunity for all residents and not a few be achieved.

I hope this example of the benefits of large scale brownfield projects to our state is helpful to you.

Sincerely,



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Whirlpool Corporation

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